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CRESTVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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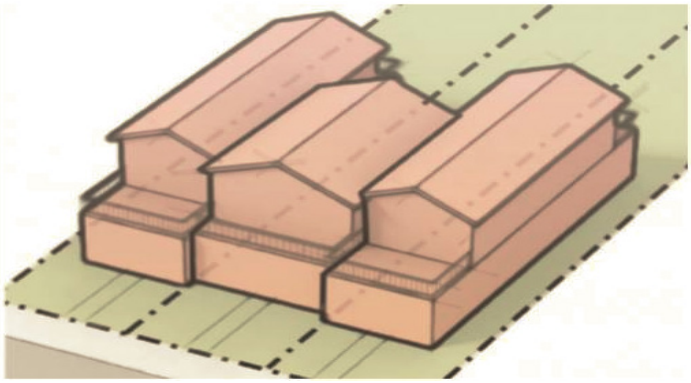
JULY 2024

H.O.M.E. Phase 2 Approved by Council – Tiny Lots

by Barbara McArthur, Brentwood NA Steering Committee

Despite significant and widespread opposition, the City Council passed a portion (Phase 1) of their H.O.M.E. ordinance* on December 7, 2023. Phase 1 effectively eliminates the single-family zoning district category by allowing three-unit multi-family uses on single-family zoned properties without requiring subdivision. Alison Alter and Mackenzie Kelly voted against it. The combined votes of the mayor and eight council members in favor of the zoning changes met the threshold to override over 15,000 protest petitions filed against the ordinance.

Council approved Phase 2 of H.O.M.E. on May 17, 2024. The ordinance has not yet been published but we know that the minimum lot size is 1,800 square feet for all SF-3 (and SF-1 and SF-2) properties without needing an additional zoning change. This means that most lots in Crestview can be subdivided into 4 to 6 lots and one unit put on each lot. Front setbacks are reduced to 10 feet not including porches which could further reduce the set back to only 5 feet. This will encourage the replacement of Crestview homes with attached rowhouses. The graphic shown is a city illustration of their vision. These changes can greatly impact the flooding issues



in Crestview, as narrow paved yards close to the street can greatly increase the flow of water on the imprevious surfaces. The largest contributors to urban flooding are increased impervious land cover and rainfall changes, and studies have shown that the combined impacts of land cover and rainfall change have increased annual flood dramatically - as much as 35% to 145%.

*The H.O.M.E. campaign was brought to Austin City Council member Leslie Pool from the backers of last year's legislative push to force small lots throughout Texas. She introduced this proposal as "Home Options for Middle-Income Empowerment " but before the vote in May she changed the acronym to mean "Home Options for Mobility and Equity".

CNA Meeting Agenda for July 2024

The Crestview Neighborhood Association (CNA) will be holding its monthly meeting on Thursday, July 18, 2024 at 7 pm. The meeting will be held in the parish hall of the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection at 2008 Justin Lane. (Note: This is a different time and place for CNA to meet. Normally CNA meets on the 2nd Monday at the Violet Crown City Church (formally the Crestview Methodist Church) at 1300 Morrow St.) The meeting agenda will include the following:

- A presentation reviewing the recent changes the City Council has made in the land development code under the H.O.M.E. initiative (see articles in this newsletter) regarding minimum lot size, compatibility and density bonuses.
- A possible vote on contributing to organizations that have successfully challenged the city's land developement code changes that were later found to be invalid by the courts
- A possible vote to allocate funds to update the CNA website.

May Officer Election Results

Below are the names of the individuals who were elected as officers for CNA at the May meeting:

President: Lourdes Jones
Vice-President: Anne-Charlotte Patterson
Secretary: Steve Kuehner
Treasurer: Nancy Harris
Newsletter Editor: Chip Harris
Advisor Positions
Place 1: Greg Smith
Place 2: Don Tucker
Place 3: Helen Kelley
Place 4: Roland Rodriguez

Thanks to everyone who participated in the elections and congratulations to the candidates that won. And thanks to retiring President Mike Lavigne for all his time and energy devoted to the association!

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NEWSLETTER

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VICE PRESIDENT	Anne-Charlotte Patterson
SECRETARY	Steve Kuehner
TREASURER	Nancy Harris
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Chip Harris
Place 1	Greg Smith
Place 2	Don Tucker
Place 3	Helen Kelley
Place 4	Roland Rodriguez

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CNA General Meetings are held the second Monday of every month at 7:00 PM at the Crestview United Methodist Church, 1300 Morrow St.
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How to Get Rid of Mosquitoes Without Killing Friendly Pollinators

Hanging out in the backyard with family and friends can be bliss. Having to shoo and swat mosquitoes at the same time? Not so much. But think twice before you call in a professional pest-control company, even one that claims to be eco-friendly or all-natural. Although this seems like a convenient option, the sprays they disperse to kill mosquitoes will probably also kill friendly pollinators — animals and insects that benefit plants.

More than 80 percent of plant communities need some pollinators — bees, butterflies, beetles, hummingbirds — to reproduce. If you lose all the pollinators in your yard, you may get a lower yield in your vegetable garden, or your flowering bushes may not make seed and bloom the following year. Even worse, the loss of pollinators could set off a domino effect beyond your yard. If plants don't survive, they can't pull carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to build leaves and stems for animals to eat, and they can't release oxygen through photosynthesis. That makes a big difference in keeping the air clean.

Mosquitoes may seem like nothing more than an obnoxious pest, but they play an important part in the ecosystem. Their eggs serve as a food source for fish and macroinvertebrates. And after they emerge from the eggs, they are food for birds, frogs, bats and other species. On the flip side, some mosquitoes carry West Nile virus, so it's important to protect yourself against their bites as much as possible.

That sets up a conundrum: How do we keep mosquitoes at bay without causing collateral damage to pollinators? Here are some options, many of which use nature as the solution.

Dump standing water. Female mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water, and they can't reproduce if the larvae have no place to live. At least once a week, empty **anything** that can collect or pool water, such as buckets, birdbaths, kiddie pools, tarps, and plant saucers. Even a discarded water bottle or an empty bag of chips with some rainwater can be a breeding ground.

Give them a Bti cocktail. For bodies of standing water that can't be drained, try using a Bti product. Bti is a bacterium that specifically targets mosquito larvae without affecting other organisms. When the larvae ingest the Bti, it kills them within minutes. Targeting larvae populations is more environmentally responsible versus wholesale spraying. You can find Bti products in garden stores.

Plant natural deterrents. Placing planters with plants that repel mosquitoes in strategic locations is one method used to reduce the number of mosquitoes. Bee balm, marigolds, spotted geraniums, lavender, sweet fern, citronella, rosemary, peppermint, catnip, garlic and sage are good choices. Brushing against the leaves activates the chemicals that interfere with the mosquitoes' ability to navigate and find prey.

Attract natural predators. Investigate which birds in your region eat mosquitoes and are willing to nest in bird boxes, then learn how to attract them. Installing bat houses is also an option.

The nuclear option. If your yard is so mosquito-infested that no other deterrent seems to work, it may be time to call in a pest-control company. It's important to hire a company that can analyze your backyard and personalize a plan to create a barrier while minimizing the risk to pollinators. No mosquito-control company can (or should) offer a 100 percent guarantee that pollinators won't be harmed. But look for professionals who try to mitigate the collateral damage by focusing on "resting areas," meaning places that mosquitoes go to escape the heat but that aren't as appealing to pollinators, such as tall grasses, woodpiles and overgrown bushes. Such professionals will also be careful to avoid spraying anything that attracts pollinators, such as flowering plants, a home garden or an aviary.

Don't waste time on gimmicks. Experts agree that most hyped-up "solutions," such as citronella candles or torches, mosquito coils, zappers and mosquito lamps, are largely ineffective, because they only emit an odor or electrocute mosquitoes in a small area.

Evaluate your lawn space, understand what attracts mosquitoes to your yard and control what you can,

Northwest Park Pool Art Survey – Art In Public Places

The City of Austin is seeking input on artwork to be installed at the Northwest District Park Pool. Feedback can be given through the end of July by completing the City's Community Engagement Survey: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeUMKu8t2PrBbydbQMVEF7hqFp-4uLsTJqwF6RtI66AQb8QPA/viewform?fbzx=3271442242310966786

History of the Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest Park Pool

On July 28, 1956, the Northwest Pool and Bathhouse opened to the public and were dedicated with great fanfare the same year on August 9th. The original cost of construction was $200,000. The Northwest pool was the first 50-meter regulation Olympic-sized pool in Austin, which allowed the city to qualify for national swimming meets. In its first full month of operations, attendance at the new Olympic-size pool eclipsed that of Barton Springs. The Northwest Park Bathhouse was a modern-design circular bathhouse with open-air dressing rooms. The building is eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The name of the park and pool was later changed to honor former Parks and Recreation Director Beverly S. Sheffield. The existing pool building will be lightly renovated, and an additional pool building will be built to provide a family restroom and changing space.

Genuine Joe Coffeehouse Still Standing

Genuine Joe Coffeehouse will continue operations at their current location at 2001 W. Anderson Lane at least through December of 2024. As Warren Zevon said: "Enjoy every sandwich."

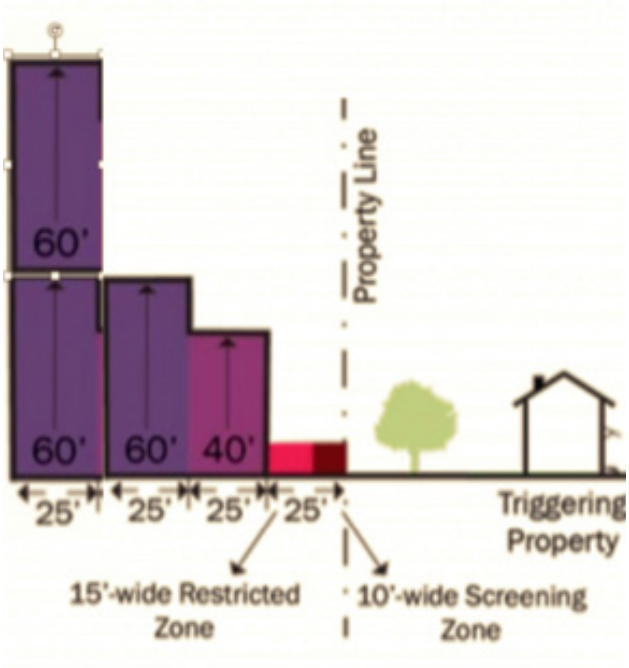
Council Passes Greatly Reduced Compatibility Standards

by Barbara McArthur, Brentwood NA Steering Committee

Council voted to reduce the distance between tall buildings and homes to only 14% of what is required now, meaning a 60-foot-tall building is allowed within 50 feet of a single-family property. There are no height constraints at a distance of 75 feet or more. The ordinance is not yet available.

Compatibility standards establish the distances between tall buildings and single-family properties. Council exempted "medium density" multi-family buildings (up to 36 units per acre) from any compatibility requirements and certain commercial zonings. For higher density multi-family uses and commercial uses, the Council is increasing the allowable height of buildings to 40' (currently 30' or two stories) if the new building is 25' from a single-family property and to a height of 60' (currently 40' or three stories) if the new building is 50' from a single-family property. The compatibility requirement ends at 75' from a single-family property, meaning that at that distance, a 90' tall building is allowable in commercial (CS) zoning districts using the City's density bonus program.

This will impact all Crestview homes abutting commercial and multi-family properties.



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What To Do (and Avoid) in Extreme Heat

Extreme heat is extremely dangerous, and can even be deadly. Heat is the leading weather-related cause of death in the United States. Prolonged exposure to hot temperatures can result in heat exhaustion, heat stroke, heat cramps, sunburn, and heat rash. Infants and young children, adults over the age of 65, people who are overweight, and people who are on certain medications — like amphetamines and antidepressants — are most at risk for heat-related illness. People who work outside and are exposed to the sun and heat also are at greater risk.

Children produce more body heat and sweat less than adults, and tend to not stay as hydrated, making them more sensitive to the heat. They can get sunburned more easily and sunburns increase your body temperature and can contribute to overheating and dehydration. Like children, older adults don't have as rapid or efficient a thermoregulatory response as other adults. Their body doesn't cool down as quickly. However, everyone should take precautions to stay cool and hydrated during extreme heat. When humidity exceeds 75 percent, the body's ability to cool off by sweating is not as effective.

One of the most effective ways to fend off heat-related illness is to stay in an air-conditioned building (even though air conditioning is a contributor to climate change). You can lower the temperature in your home by closing your shades and avoiding the use of your stove and oven. Electric fans may feel nice, but will not prevent heat-related illness. If you have individual air-conditioning units, try to contain the cold air to one area by keeping the doors closed to one room.

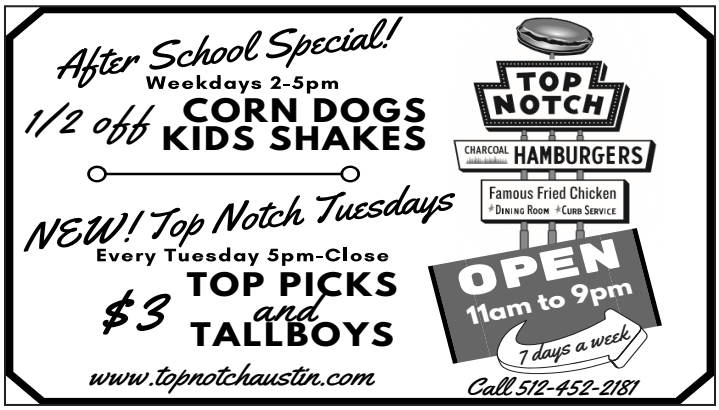
Other at-home ways of cooling down include avoiding exercise or strenuous activities, taking a cool bath or shower, placing wet cloths or ice on your wrists, neck, and temples, and wearing light-colored, loose-fitting fabrics like cotton and linen.

If your home does not have air conditioning or if you still feel hot, find a cooling center — an air-conditioned indoor location where the public can stay safe from the heat. Museums, libraries, movie theaters, cafes, malls, and stores can offer respites from the heat as well. Parents should remember to never leave children and pets unattended in the car. Placing your purse or phone next to your child or pet in the backseat can help work as a reminder to take them all with you.

Children may want to take advantage of sunny days outdoors with trips to the park, beach, or pool. Outdoor activities can be safe for children so long as there's shade and water available. Everyone, regardless of age, should take plenty of rest breaks in the shade and wear sunscreen and a hat if you're spending time outdoors, though it is best to avoid going outside between noon and 5 pm.

On hot days, you need to increase your water intake, even if you don't feel thirsty or aren't physically exerting yourself. Avoid alcoholic or caffeinated beverages, which can contribute to dehydration. If you're resistant to drinking water, drink sports drinks or drinks with electrolytes, like Pedialyte, coconut water, and Gatorade, and even milk, which will help replenish the electrolytes lost in sweat. You'll know if you're properly hydrated if you use the bathroom every two to three hours and your urine is light yellow; if it's dark yellow or gold, drink more water. One way to determine if children are dehydrated is by gently pinching their skin. If they're hydrated, the skin should bounce back; if they're dehydrated, the skin will stay pinched. Cold treats and foods with a high water content, like fruit popsciles, cucmbers and melons can keep you hydrated and cool.

Treat your pets the same way you would a baby. Don't leave them outdoors, keep them in the air conditioning, and always keep their water bowl filled.



Howdy Neighbor!

By Mike Lavigne, Past President, CNA*

It has been a great privilege to serve as CNA prez for so many years. Like so many others before me and after, I first got into neighborhood politics because the city was going to let a developer do something on my block that I didn't agree with. Naively, I thought that if my neighbors and I organized and showed up the city would listen. I quickly realized that our city government is pretty much wholly owned by real estate interests. Real estate doesn't get included in our city's list of industries for a number of reasons, but I'm convinced that if it did it would be at the top in revenue. This is why even our own City Council Member, Leslie Pool, sold us out once she became a lame duck. If you want to make a living in this town you have to bow to your (land) lords at some point.

The real estate industrial complex has spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the US and Canada to promote a trickle down housing policy, convincing rubes of all stripes that supply is the driving force in rising home prices. It doesn't matter what facts you present to them because they have successfully turned it into some sort of progressive stance to be anti-single family homes. The result? Less families in the city core, pushing people with kids to the burbs and causing more of the sprawl they claim to seek to prevent…all the while resulting in higher taxes for those of us who are just trying to hang on to our houses.

Even though the deck was stacked against us, I am proud of the hands we've won over the years. Crestview is still a great neighborhood and worth fighting for.

I got into this because I wanted to raise my kid in the neighborhood. That meant nearly a decade of throwing elbows and often being less than nice to those who sought to make our neighborhood little more than a speculator utopia. Now, my kid is at McCallum (Hi Lilah!) and I'm ready to move on and let others with younger children take the reins and fight for the neighborhood they want to raise their kids in.

As my much missed friend and neighbor, Chris Lippincott, used to remind me - neighborhoods aren't museums or historical sites, they can evolve and grow. And I'm largely pleased with how our neighborhood has evolved in the last decade. At our own pace, not the most profitable pace.

I still live in the hood and will keep a hand in local politics. Elections do matter and there's a great candidate announcing for District 7 soon!

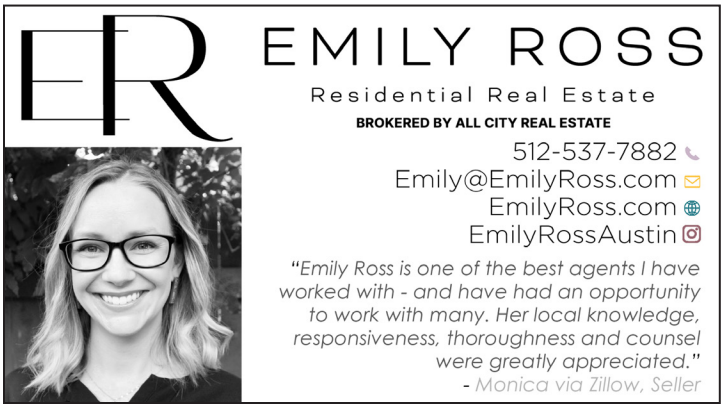
Remember, nobody will hear your voice if you don't use it. Government is supposed to work FOR you, so don't be afraid to remind them of that at every turn.

As the great songwriter Andrew Gerfers used to proclaim from the stage at the old Violet Crown Clubhouse- "Crestview is the best view!"

Hasta Luego,

Lavigne

*Editors note: Mike Lavigne served as president of CNA from May 2017 to May 2024



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